

Hu-Tech Newsletter no. 21: February 2006

Welcome to our February newsletter; in it we invite you to comment on a model developed for HSE on MSD management; we've also provided a link to some stretching exercises on our website which can be undertaken in the office, and can help to prevent MSDs. We've recently been approved to provide advice to the MoD on ergonomics / human factors issues, and we have information on this. There's also news of two new ergonomics course - *Tackling MSDs in the office*, and *Tackling MSDs in industry*, and we've provided the course dates for 2006 for the popular Ergonomics Essentials and IOSH DSE workstation assessors' courses.

You are invited to comment on: Models of best practice for cost effective active case management and rehabilitation for those with MSDs, for HSE

As you may remember from earlier newsletters, a consortium, lead by Hu-Tech Ergonomics, are undertaking research for HSE into the costs, benefits and effectiveness of programmes to manage those who experience Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs). As part of the study we have developed an evidence-based model on cost-effective active case management and rehabilitation. The target audience of the model is employers. We are keen to obtain the views of potential users of the draft model, concerning its content and usability, and are inviting interested parties to comment in one of the following ways:

1. By downloading and commenting on the proposed model. This is available from www.hu-tech.co.uk/news-consultation_rehab_guidance.html (or www.hu-tech.co.uk and follow the link). Please return comments by 24th February 2006.
2. By taking part in a focus group discussion and review of the proposed model. The last focus group will be held in London (near Euston) on **Wednesday 22nd February 2006**.

The focus groups are open to all interested parties. They will run from 12.30 – 3.00pm, and a light lunch will be provided. If you wish to take part in a focus group discussion to review the draft model, please contact linda.peacock@hu-tech.co.uk or Tel: 01604 233 428.

By participating in either or both ways, you will be helping to ensure the model is usable by professionals and different sizes and types of organisations.

The research will be completed and submitted to HSE in the summer of 2006.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Margaret Hanson (0131 718 4232) Margaret.Hanson@hu-tech.co.uk

Self-Management of Musculoskeletal Disorders

When engaging in sports, it is well known that it is just as important to warm up as to stretch afterwards in order to prevent sore muscles or stiffness the following day. Similarly when using the computer, workers should ensure they stretch and take adequate breaks to restore blood flow and prevent or relieve discomfort which can be associated with static postures and repetitive movements. Pain essentially comes from increased tension in the soft tissue (muscle, tendons or ligaments) which restricts blood flow to that area of the body (most commonly the upper limbs, for those working at computers).

Stretching and micro-pausing are two strategies which can facilitate recovery of a MSD, and also assist to prevent their onset. Stretching allows the worker to vary their posture and helps improve the blood flow to the muscles; micro-pauses (regular 3-5 second pauses from keying) give the muscles time to relax and recover from repetitive movements. Employees should be encouraged to implement these self-management strategies within their work routine, particularly those who work for long periods at the keyboard.

Hu-Tech has developed guidance on micro-pausing and simple stretches which can be completed during the day in the office, in order to promote prevention and self-management of MSDs and facilitate recovery. These can be accessed free via our website at www.hu-tech.co.uk, and can be issued to your colleagues as required.

Hu-Tech achieves Defence Standard Helpdesk status

Hu-Tech has been approved to join the MoD's Defence Standards Helpdesk Supporter Network. This is a network of recognised experts in the use of Defence Standards (DStans). We will therefore be providing limited free advice to any individual or organisation on interpreting and applying the DStans for ergonomics / human factors and safety management systems. There are over 2000 DStans which are called up as required by the MoD for new contracts to ensure standardisation. Most are free to download from the website (<http://www.dstan.mod.uk/>). Hu-Tech's list of competency within the DStan organisation is:

- Human Factors Integration
- Ergonomics
- Proof of concept trials
- CAD human modelling and design
- Safety case support

The point of contact within Hu-Tech for the DStan Helpdesk is Calum Smith (calum.smith@hu-tech.co.uk)

New ergonomics courses: Tackling MSDs in the Office and in Industry

Hu-Tech are jointly running a one day workshop with RehabWorks (physiotherapy and rehabilitation providers), to assist health professionals with understanding, assessing and managing those with MSDs in the office environment. The workshop will assume delegates have a working knowledge of the DSE Regulations, and will go beyond these, with the morning sessions covering how to assess ergonomic risks for those who have MSDs, and how to reduce those risks. It will include case studies and a practical session. In the afternoon session the issues relating to the successful rehabilitation and management of those with MSDs (particularly ULDs and low back pain) and working with occupational health providers will be discussed and illustrated with practical examples. This will be based on the findings of the latest research. The course is being run on **Wednesday 15th March 2006 (London)**. For further details of the course, and how to book see: www.conferencesandtraining.com/MSD

A parallel course, **Tackling MSDS in Industry** will be run on **Weds 26th April 2006 (Peterborough)**, £200 +VAT. This will look at assessing risks and managing those with MSDs in non-office based environments. Please contact us if you would like further information about this course.

Ergonomics Essentials and IOSH DSE Workstation Assessors courses: Dates for 2006

Our 2006 course dates for the Ergonomics Essentials course are **15-19th May (Northampton)** and **25-29th September (Northampton)** (£925).

The very popular 2 day IOSH DSE Workstation Assessors course will be run on: **9th/10th May (Edinburgh)**, **20/21st June (London)**, **5th/6th September (London)**, **14th/15th November (London)** (£490). Feedback from the most recent course includes: 'Thanks this has been one of the best courses I have so far sat, very professional'; 'Excellent course and I will be recommending it to other colleagues in my section'; 'Thanks for a great two days, I really enjoyed the course'; 'I am glad that I've attended the course and I would have no hesitation in recommending it to my peers'; 'I really enjoyed the course and feel my skills have been refreshed.'

For further details about any of these courses please contact Linda Peacock: Linda.Peacock@hu-tech.co.uk or Tel: 01604 233 428.

Note: our email addresses now include our surnames; we will still receive emails sent to our original email addresses.